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This word of thanks to a chaplain was made possible by the generous support of the Virginia Synod, ELCA, to GraceInside. Your partnership makes such a life-changing spiritual awakening possible:

“After 25 years in prison, I was paroled to live at my family home with my estranged brother and sister-in-law. Everyone else is gone. My mother and father, an older sister, a bevy of kind-hearted aunts, and beloved pets. Throughout the years, as each of my loved ones passed, there was a chaplain to walk by my side through the valley of shadows. I wouldn’t have made it without them. They brought a broken man to God, and He made me whole. When I re-entered the world, I faced many obstacles and challenges, but I made the decision not to re-offend. I reconciled with my brother, and from there, walked a day at a time with Christ. I am whole, saved and hopeful, because of GraceInside and its chaplains. I will always be grateful for these men and women who are themselves gifts from God.”

Because of your support, GraceInside provides 32 chaplains to 35 institutions housing 30,000 incarcerated men and women. Because of you, these children of God have the opportunity to experience spiritual support through worship, Bible studies, support groups and individual pastoral care. Because of you, stories like the above are not uncommon. Prison is a time of great testing – but it can also promote great spiritual growth. With the proper care and guidance, women and men can not only change their lives, but have their lives saved as well.

Addiction related offenses remain the number one reason for incarceration. Men and women arrive in prison broken, angry, often having been abused, and struggling with how and where God might be in their lives. Because of you, GraceInside’s chaplains are present to provide that loving Christian guidance so many need.

Yet, the biggest challenge GraceInside’s chaplains face is the need for more time to minister among their congregations. One institution with a 30-hour-a-week chaplain has over 1,350 men - with waiting lists to attend worship! Ninety percent of men and ninety-eight percent of women will return to the community at some point. GraceInside’s chaplains are desperate to ensure that when they do get out, they take the love of Jesus Christ with them. In so doing, they not only transform their own lives, but the lives of their children, families and communities.

With your help, we can increase the hours GraceInside chaplains serve the incarcerated. More time equals more ministry: more love of Jesus, more healing, more grace and more hope. On behalf of those that GraceInside serves, thank you for doing your part to honor Jesus’ command to “visit those in prison.” For when grace is on the inside, everyone wins.

The Virginia Synod was among the seven Protestant denominations that banded together to form GraceInside in 1920, providing almost an unbroken century of support! Further, since 2015, the Impact 1980 Program of the National Lutheran Communities and Services has provided thousands of dollars in annual grants to our chaplain at Deerfield Correctional Center, the geriatric facility where many elderly male prisoners end their earthly journeys. In the past, the present and (prayerfully), the future, the Virginia Synod has walked and will walk with GraceInside in ministering to “the least of these.” Blessings to you!